

App. No. 10/671,841

Reply to Office action of Jan. 13, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**A. Summary of the Amendment**

This is a full and timely response to the non-final Office Action dated January 13, 2005. Reexamination and reconsideration are courteously requested. By way of the present amendment, claims 1, 4, 9, 11, 14, 19, 21, 24, and 29 are amended. Further, claims 2 to 3, 12 to 13, and 22 to 23 are canceled. Thus, claims 1, 4 to 11, 14 to 21, and 24 to 30 remain pending for the Examiner's consideration, with claims 1, 9, 11, 19, 21, and 29 being independent claims.

B. Allowable Subject Matter

The examiner has acknowledged that claims 3 to 5, 9 to 10, 13 to 15, 19 to 20, 23 to 25, and 29 to 30 are directed to allowable subject matter. Applicants thank the Examiner for a thorough examination of these claims.

C. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1 to 2, 6 to 8, 11 to 12, 16 to 18, 21 to 22, and 26 to 28 are rejected as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 6,488,570 ("James") in view of U.S. Publication No. 20020187735A1 ("Nabeya"). These rejections are respectfully traversed, but are moot in view of the present amendment. As mentioned previously, the Examiner indicated that, among others, claims 3, 9, 13, 19, 23, and 29 are allowable. The features of these claims are included in independent claims 1, 9, 11, 19, 21, and 29, respectively, and the independent claims should consequently be allowed. All other claims depend from these independent claims and should also be allowed.

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D. Conclusion

In view of Applicant's amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's rejections have been overcome. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is now in condition for allowance, and such allowance is therefore earnestly requested. Should the Examiner have any questions or wish to further discuss this application, Applicants request that the Examiner contact the Applicants attorneys at the below-listed telephone number.

If for some reason Applicants have not requested a sufficient extension and/or have not paid a sufficient fee for this response and/or for the extension necessary to prevent abandonment on this application, please consider this as a request for an extension for the required time period and/or authorization to charge Deposit Account No. 50-2091 for any fee which may be due.

Respectfully submitted,

INGRASSIA FISHER & LORENZ

Dated: January 31, 2005

By: 

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